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Fair Housing News



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Our Mission

To create equal housing opportunities for all persons in America by administering laws that prohibit discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, and familial status.

Message From the Assistant Secretary

During the past few months, I've had the privilege to visit our fair housing partners in several states and participate in several events promoting fair housing. These events have afforded me the opportunity to meet government officials and fair housing and civil rights professionals who serve diverse communities and work on an array of fair housing issues.

I have also had the opportunity to visit FHEO Regional and Field offices throughout the country and work with their staff on fair housing projects. I'm impressed by their commitment to fair housing and equal opportunity in their communities.

Beginning with this issue of *Fair Housing News*, we will include a new column called "Spotlight." "Spotlight" will highlight a special or unique fair housing activity carried out by a FHEO Regional or Field office.

"Spotlight" will shine a light on the excellent work of our FHEO staff and partners.

See page 2 for our first Spotlight column, where we feature the Section 3 Program in Kansas City, Missouri.

Arkansas Joins the Fair Housing Assistance Program

On August 20, 2003, Assistant Secretary Carolyn Peoples joined Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee in celebrating the addition of the State of Arkansas to the Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP).

The ceremony, held at the Arkansas State Capitol in Little Rock, included Little Rock Mayor Jim Dailey, FHEO Regional Director Garry Sweeney representatives from the Arkansas Realtors Association, the local NAACP, and others.

The FHAP is a HUD-funded program that reimburses States or localities that investigate fair housing complaints under laws that provide rights and remedies substantially equivalent to those provided under the Federal Fair Housing Act. In order to participate in the FHAP, a State or locality must enact such a law.

The Arkansas Fair Housing Act created the Arkansas Fair Housing Commission to investigate and resolve complaints alleging discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or familial status. Arkansas residents may file a complaint



Assistant Secretary Peoples gives remarks at the Arkansas Substantial Equivalency Ceremony joined by Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee (left) and Little Rock Mayor Jim Dailey (right)

with the Commission if they believe they have experienced housing discrimination.

For more information on how a State or locality can participate in the FHAP or to find a FHAP agency in your state, go to the Partners page on the FHEO Web site at <http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing>.

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HUD Forms New Partnership to Reduce Rental Discrimination Among Hispanics

On September 22, 2003, HUD joined the National Multi Housing Council, the National Apartment Association, the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals and the Hispanic Radio Network in signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work together in reducing discrimination against Hispanics in the rental housing market.

In a ceremony held in Austin, Texas, the organizations agreed to create new and innovative education and outreach programs, improve training and internal practices to reduce discrimination, and promote more rental housing opportunities for Hispanics.

This MOU is one of a several initiatives HUD is launching in response to a recent HUD study that found that Hispanics experience adverse treatment one out of every four times they inquire about renting a home. The situation has not improved since HUD conducted a similar study in 1989. This is significant because over 45 percent of Hispanics in America live in rental housing.

To learn more about the roles of the signatories under the MOU, go to <http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing>.



Left to Right: NAHREP Vice Chairman/CEO Gary Acosta, Texas Apartment Association Executive VP George Allen, FHEO Assistant Secretary Carolyn Peoples, National Multi Housing Council/National Apartment Association VP of Property Management Jay Harris, Hispanic Radio Network Chief Operating Officer Arturo Vasquez, and FHEO General Deputy Assistant Secretary Floyd O. May



Kansas City: Promoting Small Businesses and Jobs

On September 12, 2003, at the invitation of Kansas City councilwoman, Sandra McFadden-Weaver, Assistant Secretary Carolyn Peoples visited Kansas to discuss making Kansas City the national working model of a successful Section 3 program.

General Deputy Assistant Secretary Floyd O. May, acting director for the Office of Economic Opportunity Linda J. Thompson, Kansas City Mayor Kay Barnes, Councilwoman Sandra McFadden-Weaver, Councilman Troy Nash, City Manager Wayne Cauthen, and Kansas City Housing and Community Development Director Stan Barrett also attended the meeting.

The visit culminated in a tour of the community and Oak Pointe Apartments, a HUD-assisted Multi-Family renovation project designated as the impact project for Section 3.

Section 3 programs provide economic opportunities for lower-income residents in HUD-assisted projects with businesses in those jurisdictions and areas where HUD invests public resources. Section 3 can be successfully implemented when cities like Kansas City work cooperatively to ensure such opportunities are afforded to low and very low-income residents. The Department commends Kansas City for their commitment to the Section 3 program.

As part of her trip to Kansas City, Assistant Secretary Peoples visited the FHEO Regional Office and was the honored guest at their monthly awards recognition luncheon.

Other participants in the luncheon included representatives from the Missouri Housing Commission and the Office of the Governor, and Kansas City Regional Director Macie Houston.



Left to Right: From the Governor's Office Enrique Chaurand, Kansas City Mayor Kay Barnes, Councilwoman Sandra McFadden-Weaver, Assistant Secretary Carolyn Peoples, General Deputy Assistant Secretary Floyd O. May, and Kansas City Manager Wayne Cauthen

Assistant Secretary Peoples also met with members of the Intake and Program Center Enforcement staff and commended them for their excellence in processing housing discrimination complaints.

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Agreement to Open Up Almost 3,000 Apartments for Persons with Disabilities in Puerto Rico

The Puerto Rico Public Housing Administration (PRPHA) has signed a Voluntary Compliance Agreement with HUD that will make 2,803 fully-accessible housing units available for persons with disabilities by August 31, 2010.

PRPHA entered into the agreement after a HUD Section 504 compliance review last February revealed significant deficiencies in the physical accessibility of its common areas and individual housing units, as well as deficiencies in its policies and procedures relating to persons with disabilities.

Specifically, many units the PRPHA claimed were accessible were not on accessible routes, or did not contain accessible bathrooms, kitchens, or common use areas. In addition, PRPHA did not have a policy for how it would provide reasonable accommodations nor a systematic way of tracking residents on the accessible unit waiting list.

In addition to creating 2,803 fully-accessible units, the VCA requires that PRPHA make 561 units accessible to individuals with hearing or visual disabilities, and ensure that its common use areas,

including management offices, are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Finally, the VCA requires that PRPHA computerize its tenant waiting lists, create a Web site to inform residents about revised policies and procedures, and provide fair housing training for all its employees.

HUD Launches Second Round of Accessibility Training Events

Do you have questions about the Fair Housing Act's accessibility requirements? Are you an architect, developer or builder of housing with 4 or more dwelling units? Are you a person with a disability and do you want to know what the law provides for with respect to accessible housing? Are you a recipient of HUD funds with questions about the accessibility requirements of various laws like the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 or the Americans with Disabilities Act?

If yes, HUD's new training and technical guidance program, Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST, can help! The FIRST program was launched in January 2003 and provides training and technical guidance on the accessibility requirements of the Fair Housing Act. The program is targeted to builders, owners, architects, property managers, developers and others involved in the design and construction of housing covered by the Fair Housing Act.

Upcoming FIRST training events include:

- November 2003
Midwest Affordable Housing Management Association Regional Meeting
- November 2003
Build Boston
- January 2004
Connecticut Builders Conference
- January 2004
National Association of Home Builders International Builders Show
- February 2004
Home Builders Association of Western MA Northeast Construction Expo

The program also provides information on related laws, enforcement issues, and rights of persons with disabilities, and geared to a broad audience including HUD

recipients, persons with disabilities, realtors, fair housing enforcement staff, lawyers, and organizations representing person with disabilities.

The FIRST program has already completed 26 training events in 19 states in just 180 days and has trained over 1,500 individuals nationwide, far surpassing the goal of training at least 480 persons by June 2003. The training has sustained a 95% approval rate among attendees.

The FIRST technical guidance hotline has handled over 1,200 inquiries to date, with 90% being resolved the same day they are received. The program has reached over 16,000 distinct website hits to date, an average of 60 hits a day.

For more information on upcoming training events, or for resource information go to

www.fairhousingfirst.org or call toll free 1-888-341-7781 (V/TTY), Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm Eastern time.

**HUD's Office of Fair
Housing and Equal
Opportunity**

451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC
20410

If you feel your housing
rights have been violated,
you can file a fair housing
complaint by:

Calling: 1-800-669-9777
TTY: 1-800-927-9275

OR

Complete an online form at:

www.hud.gov/fairhousing



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF FAIR HOUSING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**



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2004 NATIONAL FAIR HOUSING TRAINING CONFERENCE & CIVIL RIGHTS SUMMITT

June 14 – 18, 2004

**The Marriott Wardman Park Hotel
Connecticut Avenue and Woodley Road, N.W.
Washington, DC**

Visit the FHEO Web site for conference updates and on-line
registration beginning Spring 2004 www.hud.gov/fairhousing

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